

ENVIRONMENT AND THE PRESIDENT'S BUDGET: FISCALLY RECKLESS, MORALLY IRRESPONSIBLE, AND A FAILURE OF LEADERSHIP

Democrats believe that on every issue our nation faces, it is our responsibility to ensure that the policies we pursue are consistent with the values we cherish. The Bush Administration's 2006 budget fails in every respect. It is fiscally reckless, adding trillions to the deficit over the next 10 years. It is morally irresponsible, slashing funding for key homeland security, veterans benefits, health care, and education programs. And the Bush Administration's failure to include details of its Social Security privatization proposal and the cost of the war in Iraq is a clear failure of leadership. Democrats are fighting to restore fiscal responsibility and hold those in power responsible for their actions. We are committed to upholding the key values that are the foundation of a strong and secure middle class: national security, prosperity, community, fairness, accountability and opportunity.

Cuts overall environmental programs by 8 percent. For the fifth year in a row, the Bush budget proposes significantly cutting funding for programs that protect public health and the environment. The budget provides \$28 billion in appropriations for these programs – which is a cut of \$2.4 billion or 8 percent below the FY 2005 enacted level.

Cuts EPA funding by 6 percent. The Bush budget cuts funding for the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) by \$452 million or 5.6 percent below this year's enacted level, which would impact all of EPA's important functions, including enforcement of key environmental statutes. This proposed cut of 6 percent is on top of the 4 percent EPA cut that the Republican Congress enacted last year. If the Bush budget is enacted, the EPA budget would have been slashed from \$8.4 billion in FY 2004 to \$7.57 billion in FY 2006 – a cut of 10 percent in two short years.

Assumes drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. For the fifth year in a row, the Bush budget assumes opening the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR) to oil and gas exploration – something which the Congress has repeatedly rejected. The Bush budget assumes \$1.3 billion in ANWR lease bonuses for the Federal Treasury over the next five years.

Abandons the principle of "polluter pays" for Superfund toxic waste site cleanups. One in four people in America lives within four miles of a major toxic waste site on the "Superfund" list, but the number of annual Superfund cleanups has dropped by almost 50 percent since the beginning of the Bush Administration. The Bush budget is proposing only \$1.28 billion for Superfund cleanups in 2006, which will continue the slow pace and continue to shift the cost of these cleanups onto the taxpayers.

Slashes Clean Water funds by 33 percent and essentially freezes funding for safe drinking water. The Bush budget slashes funding for the states' Clean Water revolving loan funds, which help improve wastewater treatment facilities, by \$361 million – a 33 percent cut. This cut comes despite the fact that 45 percent of the nation's lakes and 40 percent of the nation's streams remain too polluted for fishing or swimming. The Bush budget also essentially freezes funding for states' Safe Drinking Water revolving loan funds at this year's enacted level – calling for \$850 million for Fiscal 2006.

Continues to break promise on National Parks. The President's budget for National Parks continues to be inadequate. Five years after his 2000 campaign promise to eliminate the National Parks maintenance backlog, the President has fallen \$4 billion short of that \$5 billion pledge, only keeping 20 percent of his promise. Indeed, the Director of the National Park Service testified before Congress last year that the backlog has actually grown during the Bush Administration to close to \$6 billion.

Underfunds Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) programs by \$754 million or 84 percent. The President fails once again to fully fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) at the authorized level of \$900 million. The President's budget claims to be providing \$681 million for LWCF programs, but it is using the LWCF to pay for unrelated programs. In fact, the Bush budget provides funding for only one program that is actually authorized by the LWCF ACT -- Federal Land Acquisition -- at a funding level of \$146 million, \$754 million or 84 percent below the LWCF's overall authorized level. Indeed, the Bush budget completely eliminates LWCF's State Conservation Grants. For the last forty years, this grant program has provided state and local parks and recreation directors desperately needed funding to help them preserve open space and develop recreational facilities.

Underfunds Endangered Species Act. The Bush budget cuts funding of the Fish and Wildlife endangered species recovery program by \$5.6 million or 8.1 percent below this year's enacted level. More than 200 species currently listed under the Endangered Species Act that are on the verge of extinction will be at greater risk.

Slashes funding for clean oceans. Two major reports came out last year on the health of the oceans and fisheries – one by the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy and one by the PEW Commission on Oceans – which found that the oceans are in crisis, with populations of fish and other species dropping rapidly. At a time when significant increases are needed to improve ocean health, the Bush budget ignores the crisis, slashing funding for the National Ocean Service by \$255 million or 38 percent and the National Marine Fisheries Service by \$95 million or 12 percent.

Cuts clean, renewable energy & energy efficiency programs. Despite the need for meaningful increases, the President's budget cuts renewable energy programs by 7 percent below this year's enacted level. This includes a 90 percent cut in hydropower programs and a 38 percent cut in biomass research. Similarly, the President's budget cuts energy efficiency programs by 3 percent below this year's enacted level. This includes a 25 percent cut in the highly-successful program that promotes energy efficiency in key industries.



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